

# PEER REVIEW POLICY

PJNS is a **PEER REVIEWED** journal following **DOUBLE BLIND PEER REVIEW system**. PJNS is having a panel of peer-reviewers with diversity in knowledge, viewpoint and expertise in relevant specialties.

## Responsibilities of reviewers

1. The first responsibility of reviewers is to evaluate manuscripts critically but constructively and to prepare detailed comments about the research and the manuscript to help authors improve their work. The reviewers have to assess the manuscript according to the reviewers' proforma sent to each reviewer along with the manuscript. The evaluation should include:
  - Assessments of the originality and importance of the research;  
The design of the study;
    - The methods of study, including analytic and statistical methods;
    - The presentation of the results;
    - Important findings of results discussed with new emerging findings
    - Possible confounding; the strength of the conclusions
    - The overall quality of the manuscript.
2. The second responsibility is to make recommendations to the editor regarding the suitability of the manuscript for publication in that journal. Reviewers may be asked to write some narrative comments about the manuscript that support their recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or rejection. They also can be asked to grade some characteristics of the manuscript, such as originality, quality, accuracy, readability and interest to readers, or to complete detailed questionnaires about these qualities and even assign a priority score.
3. Reviewers should declare to the editor any potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authors or the content of a manuscript they are asked to review, and in most instances when such conflicts exist should decline to review the manuscript.
4. Other responsibilities of reviewers include treating the manuscript as a confidential document and completing the review promptly. Reviewers should not show the manuscript to anyone else without the express consent of the editor.
5. Reviewers should not make derogatory comments about the manuscript in their comments for the authors. If reviewers do make such comments, the editor may choose to edit the comments or even withhold all the reviewer's comments from the authors.
6. Reviewers must not make any use of the work described in the manuscript.
7. The editor may provide guidance to the reviewers, particularly new reviewers, regarding how the editor wishes the reviewers to evaluate the manuscript and how the reviewers should meet their dual responsibility of providing constructive comments for the author and advice to the editor.
8. Reviewers should meet the agreed-upon deadline (usually 4 weeks) for manuscript review and should respond to the reminders if sent any.

## **Identification and evaluation of reviewers**

1. The editor will establish a reviewer database that includes information about the expertise of each reviewer as well as addresses and other contact information.
2. The editor may identify potential reviewers on the basis of personal knowledge of the topic or from among the authors of references in the manuscript, the membership of the professional societies, colleagues at affiliated institutions, or computer searches of databases such as PubMed, Medline, Publon etc or by asking for names from reviewers who decline to review the manuscript (see below).
3. Only those reviewers who consent to be on review panel will be added to the PJNS online review and tracking system.
4. Authors may suggest reviewers for their manuscript, whether invited to do so by the editor or not. The editor may choose to use one or more of these reviewers, but are under no obligation to do so. Authors may ask that certain people not be asked to review their manuscript and editor may decide the case accordingly.
5. The editor will ask reviewers, by telephone or e-mail, if they are willing to review a particular manuscript, and give them a date that the review is due at the editorial office (usually 3 to 4 weeks), rather than simply sending the manuscript to the reviewer. As the same time, the editor can ask for the names of others who might review the manuscript should the person initially contacted decline.
6. The editor is responsible for keeping track of reviewers, and taking steps to make sure reviews are completed in a timely manner. Each peer review is rated by the editor assigned to the manuscript and stored with the reviewer's profile. This rating becomes part of the reviewing history of each peer reviewer, and can be viewed by the editors as they select potential reviewers for future manuscripts. The reviewer database also contains information on the reviewers' areas of expertise; the number of previous invitations to review and number accepted; dates of submitted reviews, and days taken to produce reviews. Reviewers who consistently decline invitations or who write brief unhelpful reviews are eventually removed from the database.
7. To avoid overworking reviewers, each reviewer will be asked to evaluate no more than one manuscript per month. Reviewer has the right to decline the review due to any reason.

**Note:** Due to blind peer review policy, review details are not shared publicly, however can be shared to International Indexing agencies, Higher Education commission Pakistan & Pakistan Medical Commission on demand or during journal evaluation process, as the case may be.

## **Rewarding reviewers**

- “Thank you” email will be sent immediately on completion of the review to each reviewer through online review system.
- Review-credit certificate, duly signed by the editor will be sent through email to the reviewer on demand.
- Names of reviewers will be published online as well as in print copy of the journal.

## **DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNICATION TO AUTHORS**

- The editor makes a decision about the manuscript (accept, invite a revision, or reject) based on a consideration of all the reviewer comments, his own critique, and other external factors.
- What considerations should enter into the decision? These may include the comments and recommendations of the reviewers, the availability of space, and the most important is the judgment of the editor(s) regarding the suitability of the manuscript for the journal and the value and interest of the manuscript to the journal readers.
- The editor may always seek additional review and advice if required.
- Editor will communicate the decisions to authors. This means that the editor may need to provide explanations for the decision independent of the comments of the reviewers that are to be sent to the authors.
- Decisions to reject a manuscript may be based on scientific weakness (poor research design, inappropriate methods of study), lack of originality, lack of importance and interest to readers, or simply lack of space. The editor will explain to authors the reasons for decisions to reject manuscripts. This is particularly important when the editor rejects a manuscript but the tone of the comments of the reviewers that will be sent to the authors is favorable.
- The editor should actively encourage revision of manuscripts thought to be potentially acceptable. When an editor seeks revision of a manuscript, he should make clear which revisions are essential, and which are optional.
- If the comments of the reviewers are contradictory, the editor must decide and tell the authors which comments the authors should follow. Editors may also add their own comments and suggestions for revision.